Amendments To Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (currently amended) A data processing method for converting at least a portion of loyalty points stored in a loyalty account of a participant, wherein said loyalty account is associated with said participant within a loyalty program database system, comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

receiving a payment authorization request for a full purchase amount of a transaction, wherein said payment authorization request includes a merchant identifier;

approving said payment authorization request for said full purchase amount;

receiving, from said participant, a request to apply a currency value of said loyalty points to at least a portion of said full purchase amount a-charge;

retrieving information from said loyalty program database, including an amount of at least a portion of said loyalty points accumulated by said participant;

performing an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;

receiving an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a disapproval of said conversion ratio;

receiving a request from said participant to convert said loyalty points already existing in said loyalty program database to said currency value using said conversion ratio;

retrieving said loyalty points from said loyalty program database system;

converting said amount of said loyalty points to said currency value using a computerized conversion processor, wherein said converting is based on said conversion ratio; and

applying said currency value as a credit to a financial account of said participant, wherein said financial account is stored on a second database system, and wherein said currency value is applied to offset offsetting a previously executed charge with said currency value, wherein said previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement.

Claim 2 (canceled)

3.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of applying said currency value as a credit to at least one of a financial transaction account of a third party, a stored value account of a third party and an online digital wallet account of a third party.

4.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of applying said currency value as a credit to at least one of a gift product and a secondary transaction number.

5.   (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for using loyalty points over a computerized network, comprising the steps of:
      receiving a payment authorization request for a full purchase amount of a transaction, wherein said payment authorization request includes a merchant identifier;
      approving said payment authorization request for said full purchase amount;
      receiving, from a participant, a request to apply a currency value of said loyalty points to a charge at least a portion of said full purchase amount;
      retrieving information, including an amount of at least a portion of loyalty points associated with said participant, from a loyalty account of said participant, wherein said loyalty account is associated with said participant within a loyalty program database system; and
      performing an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;
      receiving an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a disapproval of said conversion ratio;
      receiving a request from said participant to convert said loyalty points already existing in said loyalty program database to said currency value using said conversion ratio;
      retrieving said loyalty points from said loyalty program database system;
      converting said loyalty points to said currency value using a computerized conversion processor, wherein said converting is based on said conversion ratio; and

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applying said currency value as a credit to a financial account of said participant, wherein said financial account is stored on a second database system, and ~~wherein said currency value is applied to offset~~ offsetting a previously executed charge <u>with said currency value, wherein said</u> <u>previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement</u>.

6.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 5, wherein said step of applying said currency value as a credit comprises applying said currency value as a credit to said financial account of said participant.

7.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 5, further comprising the step of applying said currency value as a credit to at least one of: a financial transaction account of a third party, a stored value account of a third party and an online digital wallet account of a third party.

8.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 5, further comprising the step of applying said currency value as a credit to at least one of a gift product and a secondary transaction number.

9.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 5, wherein said step of communicating with said participant comprises communicating with said participant over a wire-based network.

10.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 5, wherein said step of communicating with said participant comprises communicating with said participant over a wireless network.

11.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

registering said participant to use a loyalty program, wherein said loyalty program comprises said loyalty program database system;

establishing said loyalty account for said participant, wherein said loyalty account information is stored within said loyalty program database system; and

authenticating said participant to use said loyalty program.

12.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 5, wherein said step of retrieving information from a loyalty program operated by a third party.

13.   (original) The computer-implemented method of claim 6, further comprising the steps of:

integrating a computerized shopping network to facilitate a transaction between said participant and at least one merchant, wherein said shopping network is configured to offer for sale to said participant, over said computerized network, a variety of products or services; and

receiving, from said participant, a request to use said loyalty points to facilitate said transaction with said at least one merchant.

14.   (original) The computer-implemented method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

receiving transaction details relating to said transaction, said transaction details comprising at least an amount of said transaction; and

receiving, from said participant, information relating to said financial transaction account to be used to complete said transaction, said financial transaction account information comprising at least an account number identifying said financial transaction account.

15.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

invoking a computerized process to verify that said loyalty account has sufficient loyalty points to cover an amount of said transaction;

invoking a computerized process to verify that said financial transaction account has a sufficient credit limit to cover said amount of said transaction; and

approving said transaction when said loyalty points and said credit limit are sufficient; whereupon a confirmation of said transaction is sent to said participant.

16.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 14, further comprising the step of:

invoking a computerized process to verify that the combined available balance of said loyalty account and said transaction account covers the amount of said transaction; whereupon, when said combined available balance is sufficient, said transaction is approved and a message is returned to said participant confirming said transaction.

17.   (original) The computer-implemented method of claim 14, comprising the further step of posting a charge associated with said transaction to said financial transaction account.

18.   (previously presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, comprising the additional step of generating a billing statement for said financial transaction account reflecting said posted charge and said applied credit.

19.   (currently amended) A data processing and host server system, including at least one application program and a plurality of databases, configured to facilitate a conversion of loyalty points stored in a loyalty account, wherein said loyalty account is associated with a participant within a loyalty program database system, comprising:

a computerized transaction authorization manager configured to receive a payment authorization request for a full purchase amount of a transaction, wherein said payment authorization request includes a merchant identifier;

said computerized transaction authorization manager configured to approve said payment authorization request for said full purchase amount;

a computerized account manager user interface system configured to receive, from said participant, a request to apply a currency value of said loyalty points to a charge at least a portion of said full purchase amount;

a computerized account manager loyalty system middleware coupled to said computerized user interface system configured to interface with a loyalty program database system to access and retrieve information, including accumulated loyalty points, from said loyalty account; and

a computerized account manager conversion processor configured to perform an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;

said computerized account manager conversion processor configured to receive an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a disapproval of said conversion ratio;

said computerized account manager conversion processor configured to receive a request from said participant to convert said loyalty points already existing in said loyalty program database to said currency value using said conversion ratio;

said computerized account manager conversion processor configured to retrieve said loyalty points from said loyalty program database system; and,

a said computerized account manager conversion processor configured to convert said loyalty points to said currency value and to facilitate the application of said currency value as a credit to a financial account of said participant, wherein said financial account is stored on a second database system, and wherein said credit is applied to offset offsetting a previously executed charge with said currency value, wherein said previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement.

20.   (original) The system of claim 19, further comprising:

a computerized interface between said account manager user interface system and a third party shopping network, wherein said third party shopping network facilitates a value transaction between merchants and said participants.

21.   (previously presented) The system of claim 19, further comprising:

a computerized shopping network configured to interface with said participant and at least one merchant to facilitate a value transaction, wherein said shopping network is programmed to:

offer products for sale to said participant;

provide said participant with an option to convert loyalty points to said currency value
credit to offset the purchase of a product;

process a request from said participant to purchase said product using said converted
loyalty points;

receive a designated financial transaction account of said participant to be used to
facilitate said transaction; and,

transmit transaction details to said computerized loyalty system middleware to facilitate
said value transaction using said converted loyalty points.

22.   (original) The system of claim 21, wherein said middleware is further configured to
interface with a financial transaction system to post a transaction charge to said designated
financial transaction account and to post said applied credit to said designated financial
transaction account.

23.   (currently amended) A computerized method for converting loyalty points to a currency
credit to facilitate a transaction while shopping online, comprising the steps of:

presenting a searchable online catalog of products or services to a loyalty program
participant;

receiving participant's selection of at least one product to purchase from said online
catalog, wherein said participant chooses to pay with loyalty points;

receiving a payment authorization request for a full purchase amount of a transaction,
wherein said payment authorization request includes a merchant identifier;

approving said payment authorization request for said full purchase amount;

retrieving loyalty point information from participant's loyalty account;

performing an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based
on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory
data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;

receiving an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion
ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a
disapproval of said conversion ratio;

receiving a request from said participant to convert said loyalty points already existing in said loyalty program database to said currency value using said conversion ratio;

retrieving said loyalty points from said loyalty program database system;

invoking a conversion processor to calculate the number of said loyalty points necessary to make the purchase, wherein said calculation is based on said conversion ratio;

confirming that said participant has sufficient loyalty points to complete the purchase;

retrieving information from a participant's financial transaction account;

converting said loyalty points to a currency credit based on said conversion ratio; and

posting said currency credit to said financial transaction account, and ~~wherein said currency credit is applied to offset~~ offsetting a previously executed charge with said currency value, wherein said previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement.

24.   (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for using loyalty points, comprising the steps of:

interfacing with a loyalty program participant through a user interface system, comprising the further steps of:

authenticating said participant to verify that said participant is authorized to use a loyalty program and to identify participant's loyalty account;

receiving a payment authorization request for a full purchase amount of a transaction, wherein said payment authorization request includes a merchant identifier;

approving said payment authorization request for said full purchase amount;

receiving from said participant, a request to use at least a portion of loyalty points to facilitate payment of said full purchase amount of a transaction and information identifying a participant's financial transaction account;

performing an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;

receiving an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a disapproval of said conversion ratio;

retrieving from said loyalty account, information which includes at least the number of loyalty points available;

invoking a conversion processor to convert a designated amount of loyalty points to a currency credit based on said ratio;

posting said currency credit to said participant's financial transaction account, and wherein said credit is posted to offset offsetting a previously executed charge with said currency credit, wherein said previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement; and

debiting said designated amount of loyalty points from said loyalty account.

25. (original) The method of claim 24, wherein said interfacing step occurs online.

26. (original) The method of claim 24, wherein said interfacing step occurs using a wireless-enabled communication device.

27. (original) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of configuring a user interface system to facilitate said transaction with a shopping network.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said step of invoking a conversion processor comprises invoking, by said conversion processor, a pre-defined conversion ratio depending on at least one of a merchant status and a participant status.

29. (original) The method of claim 24, further comprising the steps of:
receiving transaction details relating to said transaction; and
comparing said transaction details to said loyalty account information and said financial transaction account to determine if transaction is authorized.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein said receiving step comprises:
receiving transaction details from a merchant.

31.   (previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein said receiving step comprises: receiving transaction details from said participant.

32.   (previously presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of gifting a gift product.

33.   (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for facilitating a transaction using loyalty points, comprising the steps of:

registering with an account manager to participate in a loyalty program;

providing authenticating information to an account manager in order to cause said account manager to verify that a participant is authorized to access said loyalty program;

selecting to redeem loyalty points associated with a loyalty account to facilitate a payment of at least a portion of a full purchase amount of said transaction, wherein said selection causes a merchant to transmit a payment authorization request for a full amount of said transaction and a merchant identifier to an authorization system and, wherein said authorization system performs the steps of:

retrieving information from a loyalty program database, including an amount of at least a portion of said loyalty points accumulated by said participant;

performing an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;

receiving an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a disapproval of said conversion ratio;

receiving a request from said participant to convert said loyalty points already existing in said loyalty program database to said currency value using said conversion ratio;

retrieving said loyalty points from said loyalty program database system;

converting said amount of said loyalty points to said currency value using a computerized conversion processor, wherein said converting is based on said conversion ratio; and

applying said currency value as a credit to a financial account of said participant, wherein said financial account is stored on a second database system and offsetting a previously executed charge with said currency value, wherein said previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement.

~~said loyalty points to be retrieved from said loyalty account and converted to a currency credit, wherein said loyalty points are deducted from said loyalty account balance and posted to a financial account of said participant to offset a previously executed charge~~

34.   (original) A method of claim 33, wherein at least one of the steps occur online.

35.   (original) A method of claim 33, wherein at least one of the steps are facilitated with a wireless-enabled communication device.

36.   (currently amended) The method of claim 34, further comprising the steps of:
        browsing a said merchant's online web site for merchandise;
        selecting a product to purchase using loyalty points by selecting an appropriate icon;
        designating said participant's financial transaction account to be associated with said loyalty program, wherein said currency credit is posted to said financial transaction account.

37.   (currently amended) A method for facilitating a transaction using loyalty points associated with a secondary transaction number, comprising the steps of:
        registering a participant to participate in a loyalty program;
        establishing a loyalty account associated with said participant;
        receiving a payment authorization request for a full purchase amount of said transaction, wherein said payment authorization request includes a merchant identifier;
        approving said payment authorization request for said full purchase amount;
        receiving a request from said participant to use loyalty points from said loyalty account to facilitate payment of at least a portion of said full purchase amount;
        retrieving loyalty account information associated with said participant;

performing an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;

receiving an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a disapproval of said conversion ratio;

receiving a request from said participant to convert said loyalty points already existing in said loyalty program database to said currency value using said conversion ratio;

retrieving said loyalty points from a loyalty program database;

invoking a conversion processor to convert said loyalty points to a currency credit based on said conversion ratio;

generating said secondary transaction number with an associated credit limit of up to said currency credit, wherein said secondary transaction number is configured in the same format as existing transaction charge cards so as to be accepted by existing transaction card authorization and settlement processing systems;

providing said secondary transaction number to said participant for use in facilitating said transaction;

offsetting a previously executed charge by posting said currency credit to a financial account of said participant to offset a previously executed charge, wherein said previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement; and

updating said loyalty account by reducing balance by the amount of said converted loyalty points.

38. (previously presented) An account manager system for facilitating a transaction within a shopping network using loyalty points, comprising:

at least one user interface system configured to facilitate communication with a shopping network and loyalty program participants, said shopping network comprising at least one merchant, wherein said shopping network is configured to provide to said participants a catalog of goods and services offered by said at least one merchant and operative to permit said participants to select goods and services from said catalog and to submit a request to obtain said goods and services in exchange for loyalty points;

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a loyalty program system comprising at least a first computerized database system for managing loyalty program accounts, wherein said loyalty program system performs the steps of:

a financial transaction account system comprising at least a second computerized database system for managing financial transaction accounts of said participants;

a conversion system for converting loyalty points to a currency value credit; ~~and~~

a loyalty program middleware system configured to invoke said conversion system~~,~~ to:

receive a payment authorization request for a full purchase amount of said transaction, wherein said payment authorization request includes a merchant identifier;

approve said payment authorization request for said full purchase amount;

receiving, from said participant, a request to apply a currency value of said loyalty points to at least a portion of said full purchase amount ~~a charge~~;

retrieve information from said loyalty program database, including an amount of at least a portion of said loyalty points accumulated by said participant;

perform an analysis of said merchant identifier to determine a conversion ratio based on said merchant identifier and based on at least one of: a date of said transaction, inventory data, status of said participant, and method of facilitating said transaction;

receive an indicator of at least one of: an approval and disapproval of said conversion ratio from said participant, wherein said transaction is canceled when said indicator is a disapproval of said conversion ratio;

receive a request from said participant to convert said loyalty points already existing in said loyalty program database to said currency value using said conversion ratio; and,

retrieve said loyalty points from said loyalty program database system; and,

said financial transaction account system for applying said currency value as a credit to a financial account of said participant, wherein said financial account is stored on a second database system and offsetting a previously executed charge with said currency value, wherein said previously executed charge is provided to said participant in a billing statement.

~~receive transaction details from said at least one user interface system, and to facilitate the exchange of account data and currency values between said loyalty program accounts and said financial transaction accounts, wherein said currency value is exchanged to offset a previously executed charge.~~

39.   (original) The system of claim 38, the financial transaction account system further comprising:

a financial capture system configured to capture and process transaction details;

an accounts receivable system configured to post transaction card charges and loyalty point credits to said transaction card accounts.

40.   (currently amended) The system of claim 38, the transaction card system further comprising:

a charge authorization system configured to compare said transaction details with participants' transaction card accounts and participants' loyalty program accounts, wherein said charge authorization system verifies that participants' have sufficient loyalty points and credit limit.

41.   (original) The system of claim 38, the conversion system further comprising:

at least a third computerized database system of conversion ratios, wherein said conversion ratios vary according to merchant or participant status;

a conversion processor for converting loyalty points to loyalty currency credit using said conversion ratio that is appropriate for the particular participant or merchant.